

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 026201

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SUBJECT: "TIME"INTERVIEW WITH KING

1. FEB 10 ISSUE OF "TIME'S" DOMESTIC EDITION, WHICH APPEARED ON NEWSSTANDS FEB 4, CARRIES A STORY ON THAILAND. AFTER A RELATIVELY STRAIGHTFORWARD ACCOUNT OF THE RECENT ELECTIONS AND THEIR OUTCOME, THE ARTICLE ENDS WITH THE FOLLOWING THREE PARAGRAPHS:

2. "MANY THAIS STILL FEAR THAT THE MILITARY MIGHT TRY TO MOVE IN SHOULD THE NEW GOVERNMENT PROVE HOPELESSLY UNSTABLE AND UNABLE TO GOVERN. THE KEY TO THE CRUCIAL MONTHS AHEAD MAY THEN CONCEIVABLY LIE WITH THAILAND'S POPULAR YOUNG MONARCH, KING BHUMIBOL ADULYADEJ, 47, WHO COULD INTERVENE AND APPOINT A NEW CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT, AS HE DID DURING THE CRITICAL DAYS OF THE 1973 UPHEAVAL. ALTHOUGH BHUMIBOL HAS ALWAYS REMAINED CAREFULLY ALOOF FROM POLITICS, HE IS THE ONE FIGURE WHO IS RESPECTED BY ALL POLITICAL FACTIONS, FROM STUDENTS AND MERCHANTS TO MILITARY MEN AND PEASANTS."

3. "ROYAL FATIGUES. THE VERY MODEL OF A WORKING KING, HE
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PAGE 02 STATE 026201

IS GOVERNED BY ONE OVERRIDING AMBITION: TO BRING HIS BACK-

WARD COUNTRY INTO THE MODERN WORLD. ON A RECENT VISIT, TIME
CORRESPONDENT PETER RANGE FOUND HIM DECKED OUT IN COMBAT

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BOOTS AND FATIGUES, A WALKIE-TALKIE SLUNG OVER EACH
SHOULDER, INSPECTING AN EXPERIMENTAL CROP-SUBSTITUTION
PROGRAM AMONG A LAHU HILL TRIBE IN NORTHERN THAILAND.

4."THE CONSTITUTION IS NOT SO IMPORTANT,' HE SAYS. 'IT
DEPENDS ON WHAT THE GOVERNMENT DOES FOR THE PEOPLE.' THE
RECORD HAS NOT BEEN VERY ENCOURAGING SINCE THAILAND
ABOLISHED ITS ABSOLUTE MONARCHY IN 1932: TEN CONSTITUTIONS,
ELEVEN COUPS D'ETAT, DOZENS OF PLOTS AND INTRIGUES BY
POLITICAL AND MILITARY UPSTARTS. BUT BHUMIBOL IS OPTI-
MISTIC. SO IS NARONG KETUDAT, EDITOR AND PUBLISHER OF
THE LEFT-WING DAILY PRACHATHIPATAI, WHO SAID AFTER LAST
WEEK'S ELECTION: 'YOU HAVE TO BEGIN SOMEWHERE -- IT'S A
START.' NOT TOO BAD A START EITHER." KISSINGER

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